

REMARKS

Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 1-3, 6, 8-20 and 22-31 are currently pending in the subject application. Claims 9-15 and 22-28 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 8, 16, and 17 are independent.

By the instant amendment, claims 1-3, 8, 9, 12, and 17 are amended. Claims 1-3, 8, 9, and 12 are amended to be dependent, directly or indirectly, from allowed claim 16, and claim 17 is amended to include the limitations of allowed claim 16. No new matter is added.

A. Introduction

In the outstanding Office action:

- (a) claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,154,667 to Miura et al. ("the Miura et al. reference") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,580,574 to Gavish ("the Gavish reference") and U.S. Patent No. 4,017,028 to Manor ("the Manor reference");
- (b) claims 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Miura et al., Gavish and Manor references and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,427,093 to Ogawa et al. ("the Ogawa et al. reference");
- (c) claims 17-20 and 29-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Miura et al. reference in view of the Gavish reference, Manor reference and U.S. Patent No. 4,883,353 to Hausman et al. ("the Hausman et al. reference"); and
- (d) claim 16 is allowed.

B. Asserted Obviousness Rejections of Claims 1-3 and 6

In the outstanding Office action, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Miura et al. reference in view of the Gavish and Manor references, and claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Miura et al., Gavish and Manor references and further in view of the Ogawa et al. reference. Applicants respectfully traverse these obviousness rejections for at least the following reasons.

By the instant amendment, claims 1-3 have been amended to depend from allowed independent claim 16. Accordingly, claims 1-3 are allowable at least for the reasons claim 16 is allowed. Claim 6 depends from allowable claim 1 and, therefore, is allowable for at least the reasons claim 1 is allowable. It is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-3 and 6 be favorably reconsidered and withdrawn.

C. Asserted Obviousness Rejection of Claim 8

In the outstanding Office action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Miura et al., Gavish and Manor references and further in view of the Ogawa et al. reference. Applicants respectfully traverse this obviousness rejection for at least the following reasons.

By the instant amendment, claim 8 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 1. Claim 1 depends from allowed claim 16, and therefore, claim 8 is allowable for at least the reasons claim 16 is allowed. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be favorably reconsidered and withdrawn.

D. Asserted Obviousness Rejection of Claims 17-20 and 29-31

In the outstanding Office action, claims 17-20 and 29-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Miura et al. reference in view of the Gavish, Manor and the Hausman et al. references. Applicants respectfully traverse this obviousness rejection for at least the following reasons.

By the instant amendment, claim 17 has been amended to include all the limitations of independent allowed claim 16. Accordingly, claim 17 is allowable at least for the reasons claim 16 is allowed. Claims 18-20 and 29-31 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on allowable claim 17. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be favorably reconsidered and withdrawn.

E. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claim 16. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that all of the claims are in condition for allowance.

F. Rejoinder of Withdrawn Claims

By the instant amendment, withdrawn claims 9 and 12 have been amended to depend from allowed independent claim 16. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request rejoinder of withdrawn claims 9-15. Further, in the event claim 17 is found to be allowable, applicants respectfully request rejoinder of withdrawn claims 22-28, which depend directly or indirectly on independent claim 17.

G. Conclusion

The above remarks demonstrate the failings of the outstanding rejections, and are sufficient to overcome them. These remarks, however, are not intended to, nor need they, comprehensively address each and every reason for the patentability of the claimed subject matter over the applied prior art. Accordingly, applicants *do not* contend that the claims are patentable solely on the basis of the particular claim elements discussed above.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of this application is earnestly solicited, and an early and favorable further action upon all the claims is hereby requested. Upon allowance, rejoinder of the withdrawn claims is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to expedite resolution of any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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